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GIOVANNI VIRGINIO SCHIAPARELLI.

BY R. G. AITKEN.

Three times within as many years we have had to record the death of one of those leaders in astronomical science upon whom our Society had bestowed the highest honor within its gift, the Bruce Medal; and it is now our sad duty to add another name to this roll—GIOVANNI VIRGINIO SCHIAPARELLI, who died on July 4, 1910, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

It is not necessary here to pass in review the rich contributions SCHIAPARELLI made to the progress of his chosen science, for, in March, 1902,¹ the President of our Society, in announcing the award of the Bruce Medal, gave a full account of his great services.

Fortunately, SCHIAPARELLI's activities did not cease with his withdrawal from the directorship of the Milan Observatory in 1900. Ill health and failing eyesight, he might well have pleaded, absolved him from further labors; but, notwithstanding these afflictions, he continued his work to the end of his life. In 1903 his book, "Astronomy in the Old Testament," was published; in 1908, papers in *Scientia*, a quarterly review, on the birth and progress of astronomy amongst the Babylonians; in 1909, the volume containing his measures of double-stars in the years 1886 to 1900²; and in the present year, in the *Bulletin Astronomique* a paper expressing his matured views on cometary orbits, cosmic currents, and meteorites. The mere mention of these works is sufficient to show SCHIAPARELLI's working power and the wide range of his interests.

In 1908, Professor E. C. PICKERING made a study of the "Foreign Associates of National Societies,"³ in which he showed that a man's status as foreign associate in the national societies of the seven great nations of the world (Russia, United States, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, France, and Italy) might fairly be taken as a measure of his eminence. Judged by this standard, SCHIAPARELLI stood in the very front rank of the scientific men of the world, for he was honored by

¹ See these *Publications*, **14**, 37, 1902.

² Reviewed on page 137 of the present volume of these *Publications*.

³ *Popular Science Monthly*, **73**, 372, 1908



GIOVANI VIRGINIO SCHIAPARELLI.

five of these societies (in addition, of course, to his own national society, the Royal Academy of the Lincei), our own country being the only one that failed to recognize him in this manner. Four national societies (those of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France) "confer a special honor on a few of their foreign associates by granting them the privileges of resident members, or by placing them in a special class of honorary members." No scientific man has been thus honored by all four societies, and only two, SUEAS and SCHIAPARELLI, by three of them.

Thus it appears that, like his great contemporary, NEWCOMB, his worth was fully recognized by his own generation, and that, like NEWCOMB again, he had the privilege of continuing his chosen work to the very end of a long life.

AN EXPEDITION TO PHOTOGRAPH A COMET.

BY FERDINAND ELLERMAN.

The Comet Committee of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, having secured a grant from the Rumford Fund of the National Academy of Sciences in the fall of 1909, decided to send an expedition to the mid-Pacific for photographing Halley's Comet, provided suitable apparatus and an observer could be borrowed, as the funds were not sufficient to pay for much more than the expenses of the expedition.

The location decided on by the committee was the island of Oahu of the Hawaiian group, and it fell to my lot to be chosen to carry out the program. A leave of absence covering the time required for the expedition was granted by the president of the Carnegie Institution.

The various parts of the instrumental equipment were assembled at the work-shops of the Mt. Wilson Solar Observatory in Pasadena, and put into working condition. They were just ready when Comet *a* 1910 made its appearance, and were sent to Mt. Wilson and given a try-out. Everything worked satis-